WarLands

Three Stories

IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

WARLANDS

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Created by
Pat Lee and
Adrian Tsang

Pencils **Pat Lee**
Plot
Separations
Lighting Effects
Story **Adrian Tsang**
Pencils **Lou Kang**
Backgrounds Assists **James Raiz**
Inks **Alvin Lee**
Separations **Frozen Light Prod**
Ramil Sunga
Shane Law
Color Assists **Erik Sander**
Letters **Simon Yeung**

Editor **Roger Lee**
Production Manager **Derek Choo-Wing**
Director of Sales **Amelia Lo**
Graphic Design **Talent Pun**
Film Output **Kell-O-Graphics**

FOR IMAGE COMICS: JIM VALENTINO, PUBLISHER
ANTHONY BOZZI, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
BRENT BRAUN, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION

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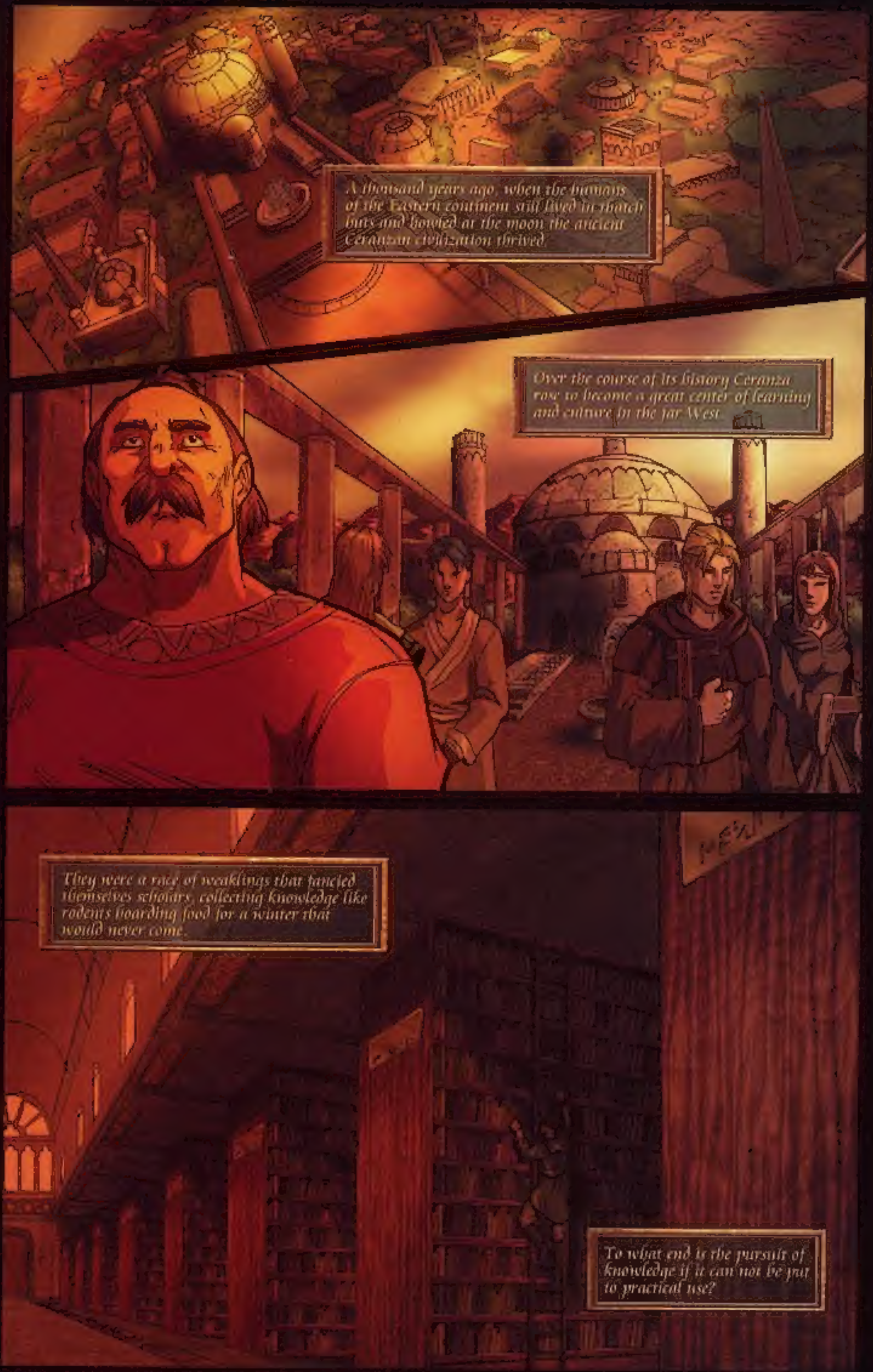
Fifty years.
A long time to strive for a goal. The fault rests with me that we have made no progress.
I wonder, does G'Dim regret that he has spent his life following me?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE ZEPH?
THE DATARAN GOSPELS-AND SOME OF JERELL AND ELESSA'S OLD JOURNALS-I'M HOPING THEY MAY HOLD SOME HINTS AS TO A SOLUTION...
My oldest friend is dying. A mortal wound in a battle
kaff! Kaff! --BAH..BOOKS AND SCROLLS ARE NOT THE PURSUIT OF A WARRIOR, BOY.
SIGH
WELL DON'T JUST SIT THERE-READ THE DAMNED THING ALOUD-
him what comfort I can...
-THE SOUND OF YOUR FINGERS TURNING PAGES IS DRIVING ME MAD-
kaff!
ALRIGHT...
" I AM MALAGEN..."

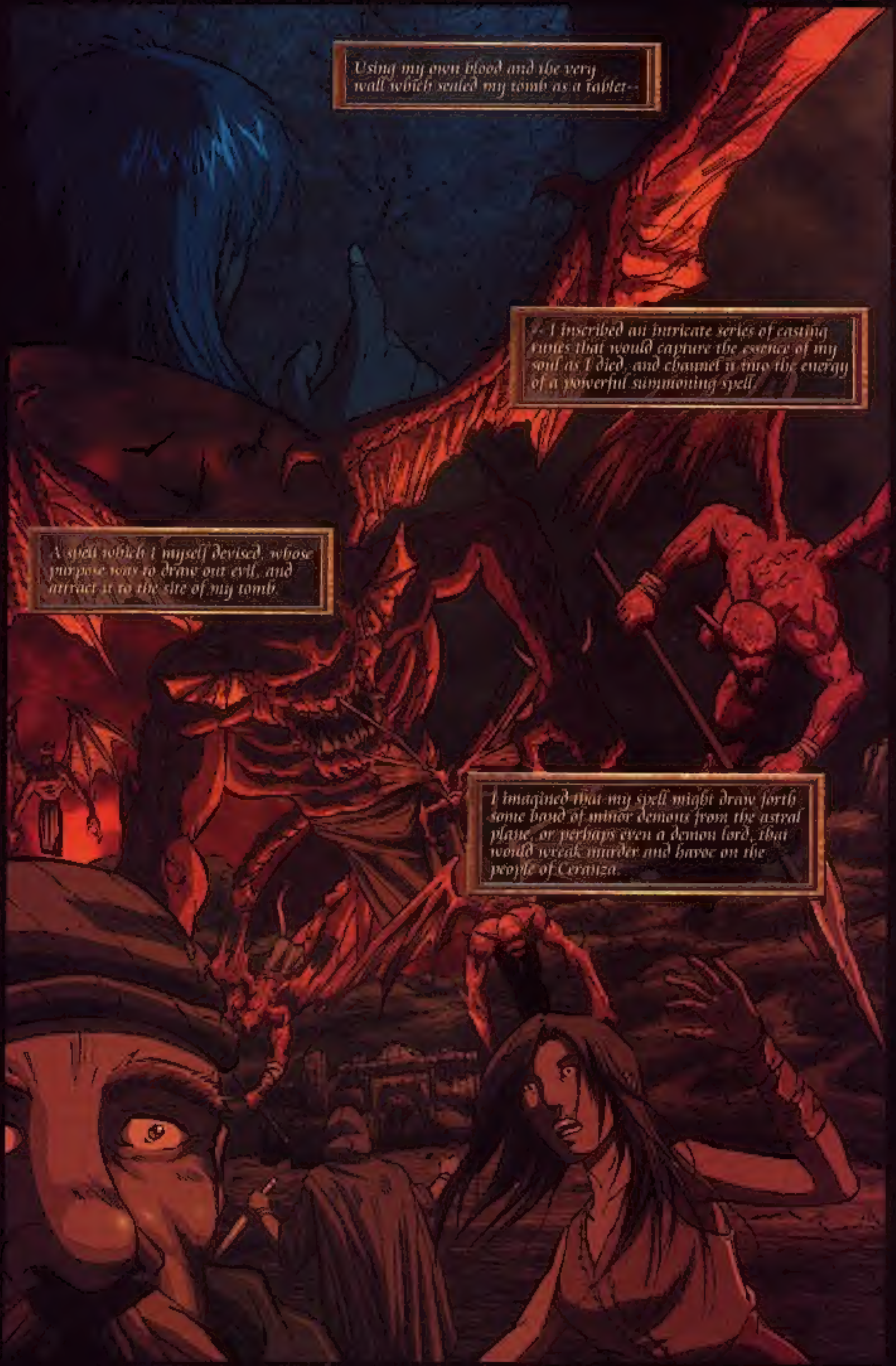
* Excerpted from 'The Dataran Gospels'


A thousand years ago, when the humans of the Eastern continent still lived in thatch huts and howled at the moon the ancient Ceranzan civilization thrived.
Over the course of its history Ceranza rose to become a great center of learning and culture in the far West.
They were a race of weaklings that fancied themselves scholars, collecting knowledge like rodents hoarding food for a winter that would never come.
To what end is the pursuit of knowledge if it can not be put to practical use?

I knew this. As did a handful of others.
Together we scoured the collected wisdom of our people in search of a means to provide us with the power we so fervently desired.
Soon, my sphere of study entered the intricate domain of dark magik, a path of learning long ago deemed too dangerous to pursue by my timid predecessors.

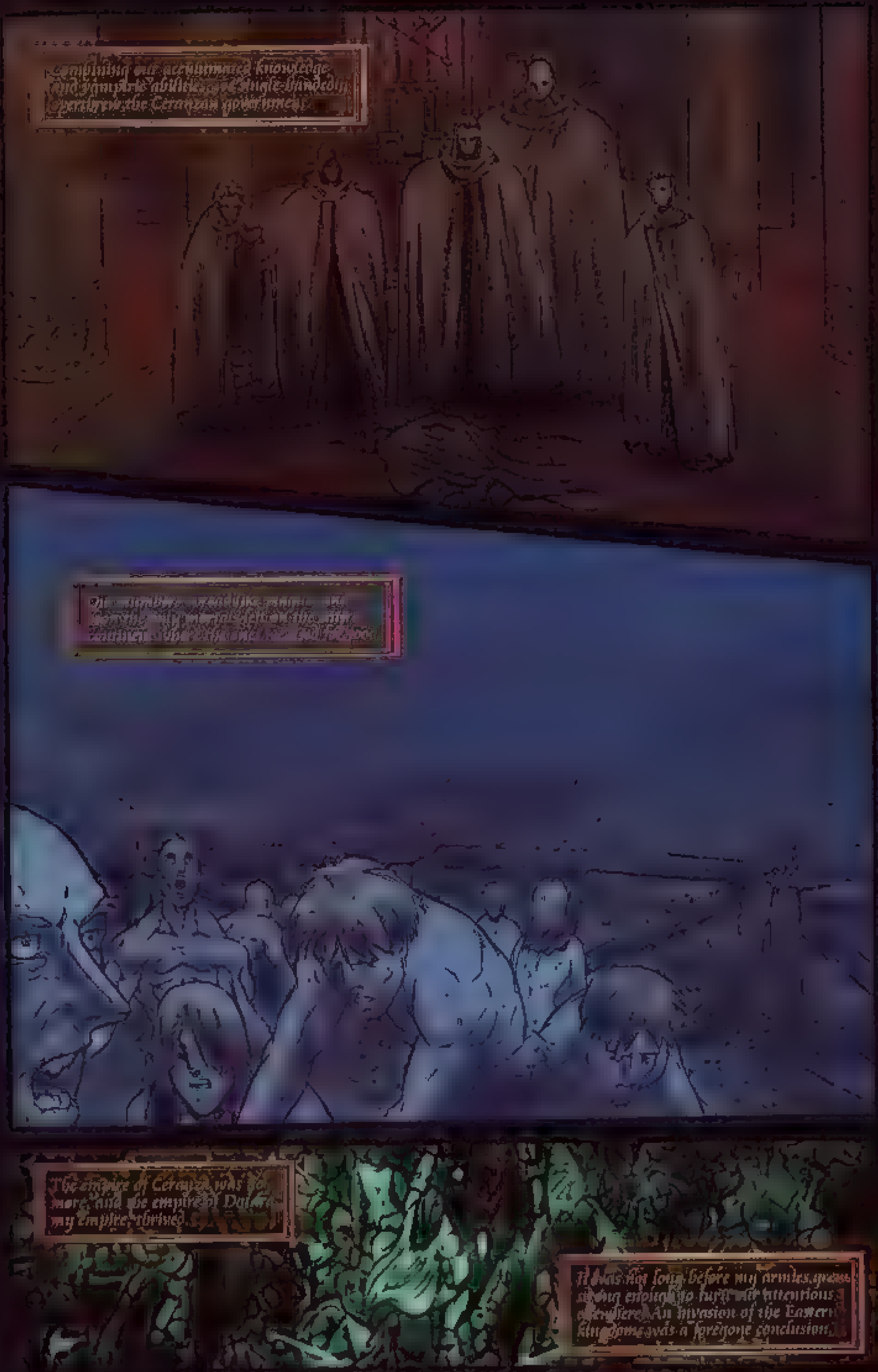
It was there that I found the power I sought. After years of searching I unlocked the secrets of the harnessing and control of magical energy on a scale unseen since the age of Faerie.
I had only to reach out and grasp it in my hands, and Ceranza would be mine. On the eve of my triumph however, we were discovered.
The emperor's spies invaded our inner sanctum and placed us under imperial arrest.

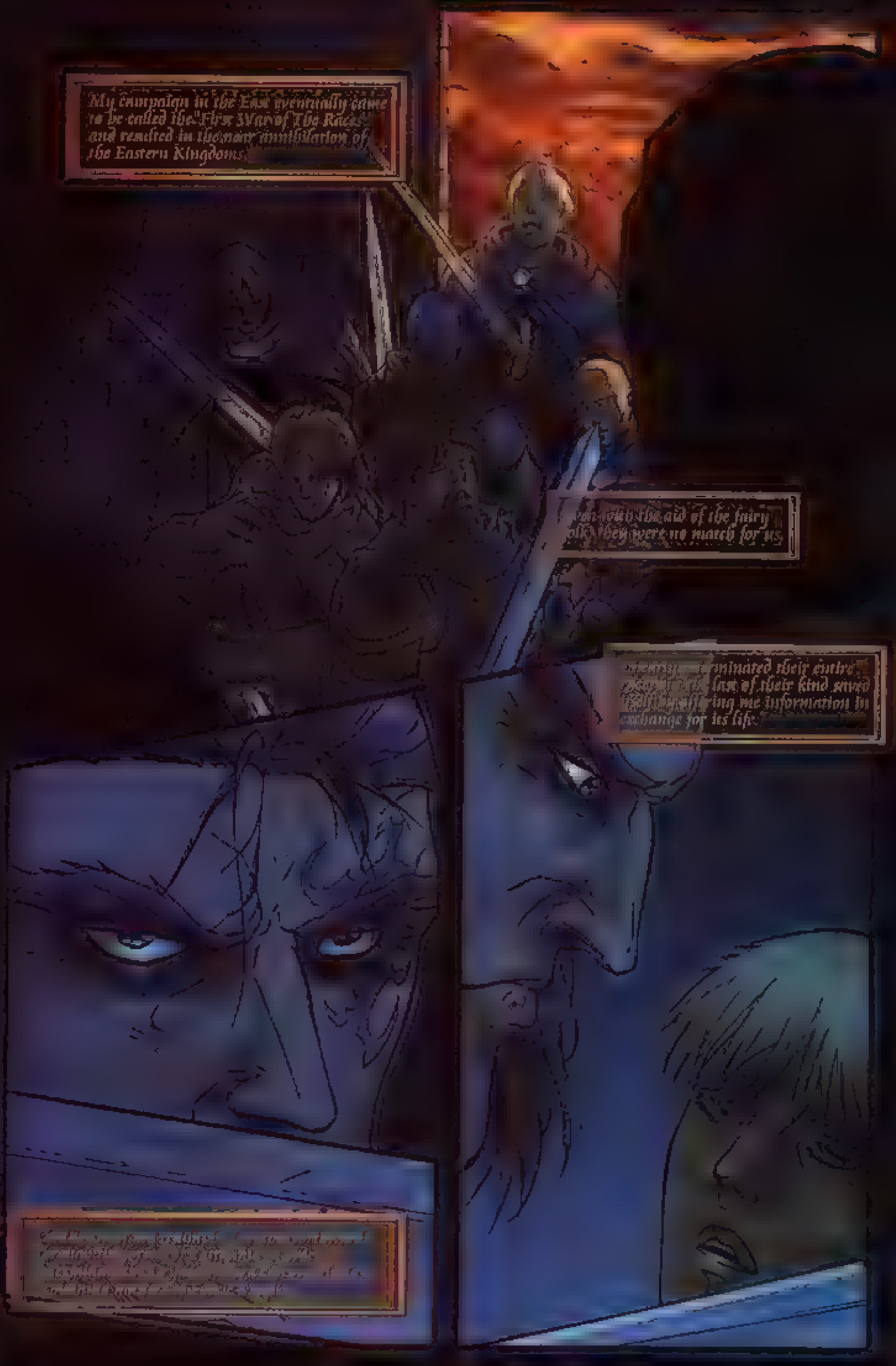
We were tried and convicted in Ceranzan court on charges of Sedition--
--and sentenced to be walled away
They should have killed us when they had the chance.
It took nearly two weeks to die a slow agonizing death of thirst and starvation. But the time was not wasted.
In that time I used my knowledge of the


Using my own blood and the very wall which sealed my tomb as a tablet--
--I inscribed an intricate series of casting runes that would capture the essence of my soul as I died, and channel it into the energy of a powerful summoning spell.
A spell which I myself devised, whose purpose was to draw out evil, and attract it to the site of my tomb.
I imagined that my spell might draw forth some band of minor demons from the astral plane, or perhaps even a demon lord, that would wreak murder and havoc on the people of Ceranza.

I died with the grin of sated vengeance on my face wishing only that I could have survived to see the torment of my enemies.
The spell performed perfectly, and as my soul left my body it was fed directly into the runes of the enchantment.
What happened next however, was an outcome not even I could have imagined.
Instead of summoning a demon however, the spell attracted the notice of Tara, Goddess of Darkness.
My next memory is of awakening from death inside my tomb--
--and of a gripping desire to be free of it.

Lara had given me the strength to free myself from my tomb. In return she asked only that I continue what I had started in my life as a man, and convert my followers to her worship.
I alone had been chosen by The Goddess to be the father of her chosen people. And the first of those I made my comrades from my former life.
We were the first, the trueborn of all vampires.

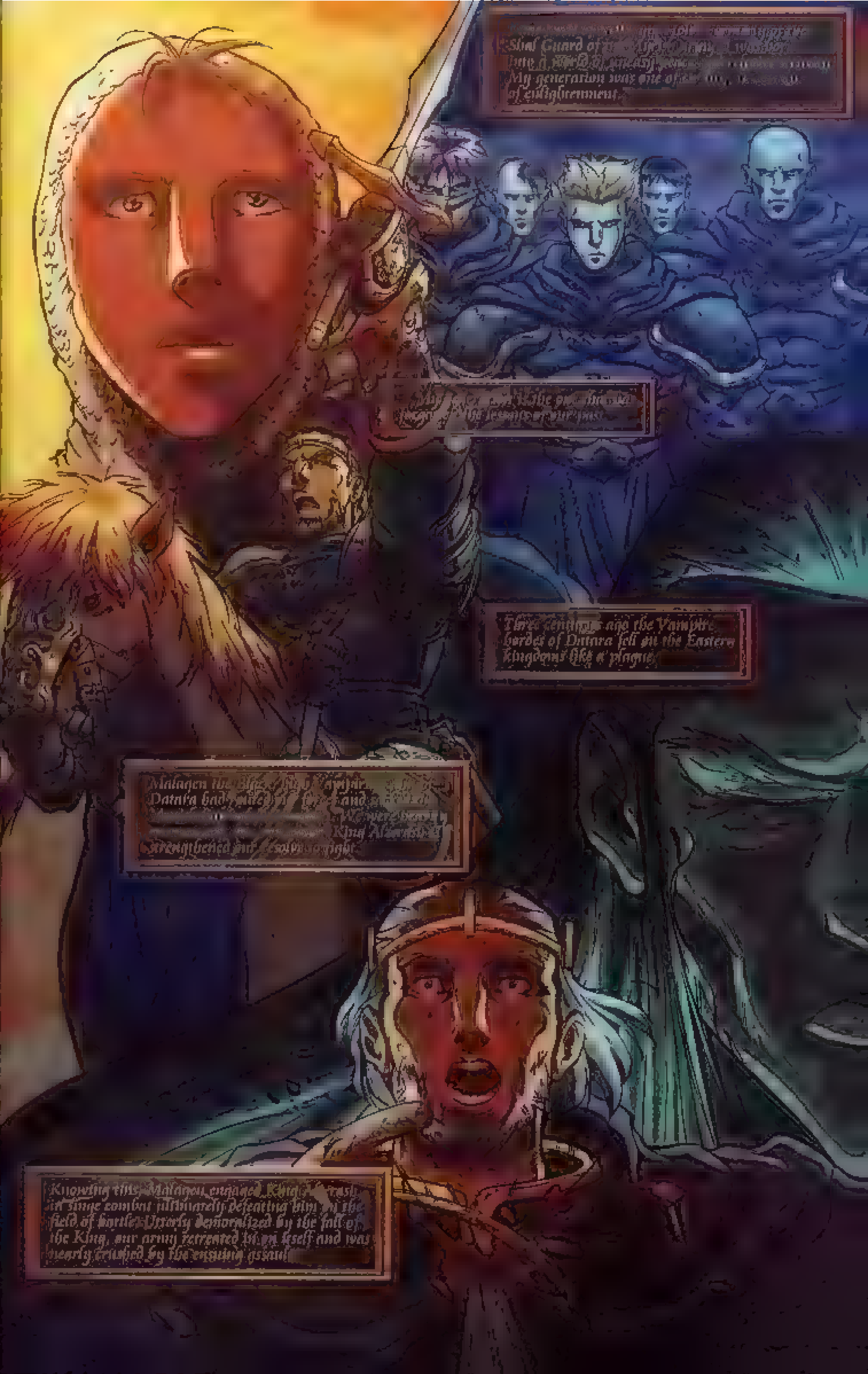

Combining our accumulated knowledge and vampiric abilities, we single-handedly overthrew the Ceranzan government.
The empire of Ceranza was no more, and the empire of
my empire, thrived.
It was not long before my armies grew strong enough to turn our attentions elsewhere. An invasion of the Eastern kingdoms was a foregone conclusion.

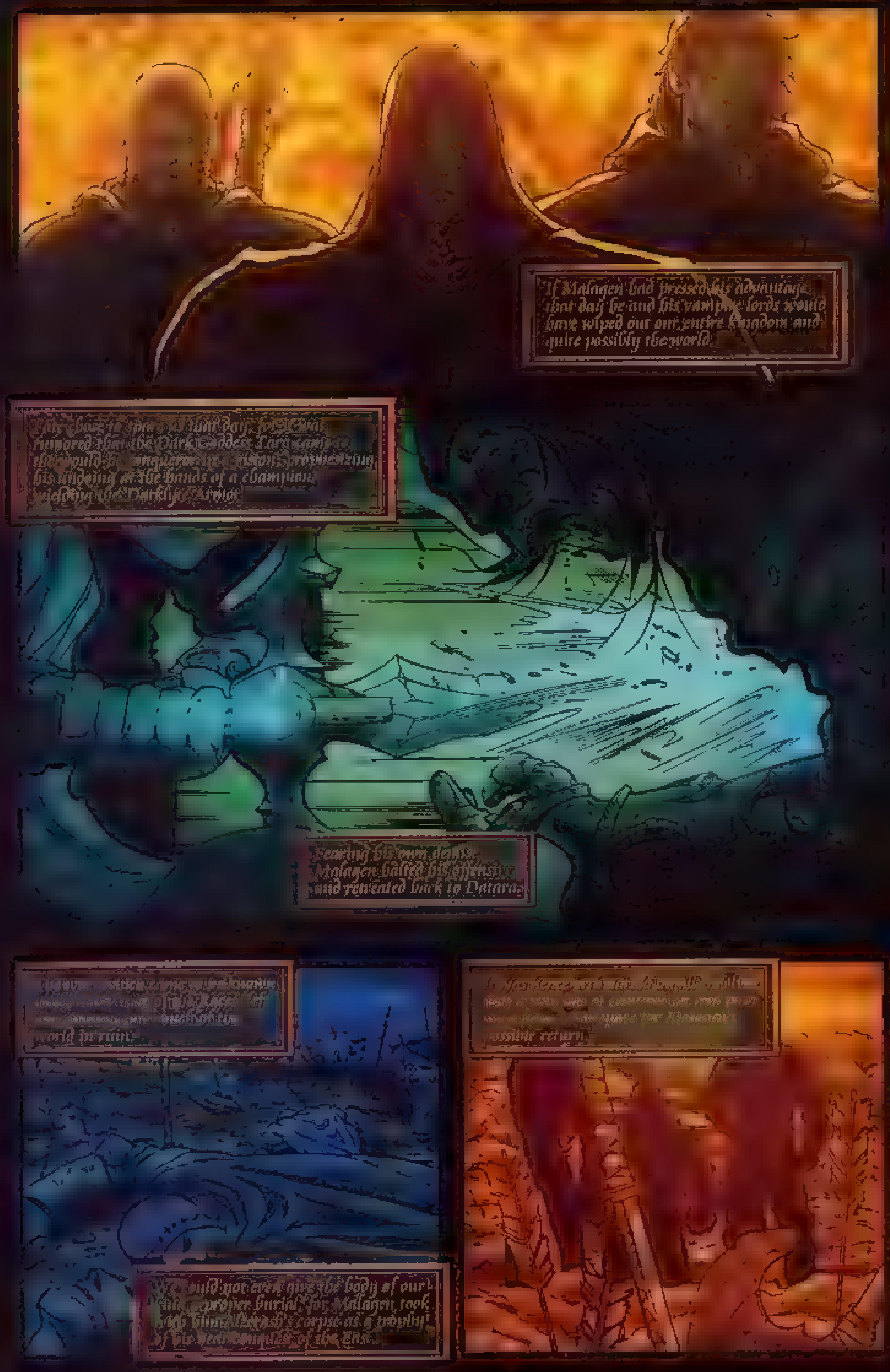

My campaign in the East eventually came to be called the "First War of The Races" and resulted in the near annihilation of the Eastern Kingdoms.
the aid of the fairy they were no match for us.
minated their entire last of their kind saved ing me information in exchange for its life.

Naturally, I did not believe it at first, but soon afterward Tara communed with me and revealed the Dryad's prophecy to be truth, commanding me to halt the invasion and return to Datorak.
I took the Dryad with me, for a creature with the ability to see the future would be indeed useful.
Five Hundred years have passed. And now, I have a champion of my own.

Many humans were taken in the first war of the races and turned to serve me. I chose the finest warrior among them and named him Aalok, teaching him the darkarts and enabling him to use
He will go to the East and claim the Darklyte Armor before this 'Champion of Light'
By bending the prophecy to my own will, it will be undone, and the power of the Darklyte armor shall be given to me to wield.
And with it, I will finally destroy my enemies, and drive the light out of the world for all eternity.
To be continued
Continued in Warlands Issue #1

"FOR I AM MALAGEN. AND I AM A VAMPIRE..."
HAH. THE RAVINGS OF A DEAD MANIAC YOU'LL NOT FIND ANY ANSWERS THERE BOY-ONLY...
G'DAR!!
MAKE A DODDERING OLD MAN HAPPY BOY, KEEP READING.
AL-ALRIGHT..
IF I'LL NOT DIE IN BATTLE, THEN AT LEAST I CAN PASS FROM THIS WORLD SINGING PRAISES TO FALLEN COMRADES AND RELIVING FORMER GLORIES.
* See Warlands Volume 1 for details.


My generation was one of
of enlightenment.
Three centuries ago the Vampire hordes of Datara fell on the Eastern kingdoms like a plague.
Malagen
Datara had
King
Knowing this, Malagen engaged King
in singe combat ultimately defeating him on the field of battle. Utterly demoralized by the fall of the King, our army retreated in on itself and was nearly crushed by the ensuing assault.


If Malagen had pressed his advantage that day he and his vampire lords would have wiped out our entire kingdom and quite possibly the world.
his undoing at the hands of a champion
Fearing his own demise, Malagen halted his offensive and retreated back to Dataras.
world in ruin.
possible return.

Eventually the promises that were made that faithful day on the Myrish plains were forgotten as well, and the world slipped back into fear and distrust.
Without cooperation our nations were ripe for the picking.
Malagen knew this and it was only a matter of time before he gathered enough strength to return.
The visions of the Darklyte armor that ultimately forced his retreat so many years ago consumed his years spent in solitude.

fying ferocity that
only true evil possesses. Led by Prince Anlok
son of Malagen, they quickly overwhelmed
the whole of the Shal Peninsula.

* See Warlands Issue #1 for details.

In the aftermath of Shal Hazar's fall, I and my newfound companions, who had also survived the attack, set out on a quest that would change the face of Warlands forever...
For awhile it seemed clear that the Darklyte army would decide the outcome of the war, no one would have predicted what would happen next.
Or the price that would be decreed on us for all the blood that would be spilt.

Many lives were lost when we left the safety of our forest to take up arms against the Dataris Horde.

Soon, we were divided equally between Elyra's supporters and my own.
Elyra was the queen, however, so ours became the task of rebellion.
At first, we met in secret seeking ways to peacefully convince the Queen that ours was the path to follow...

violence.
before the winter of 429 by the Elvish
a noble elf whom had made
on both sides because of his neutrality
killed by an assassin's arrow.
things continued
until Elyra and
each other openly.

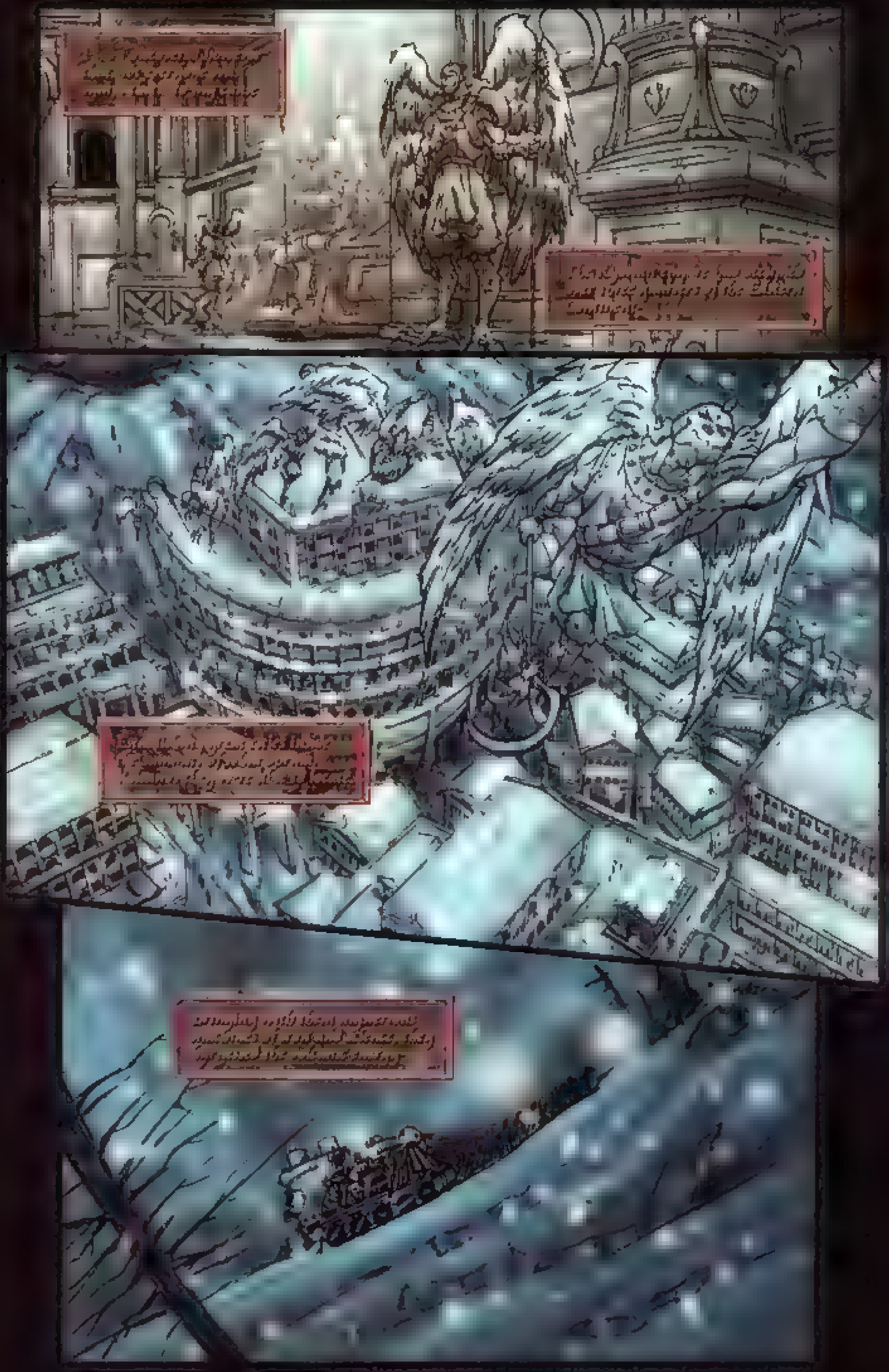
Tensions ran high.

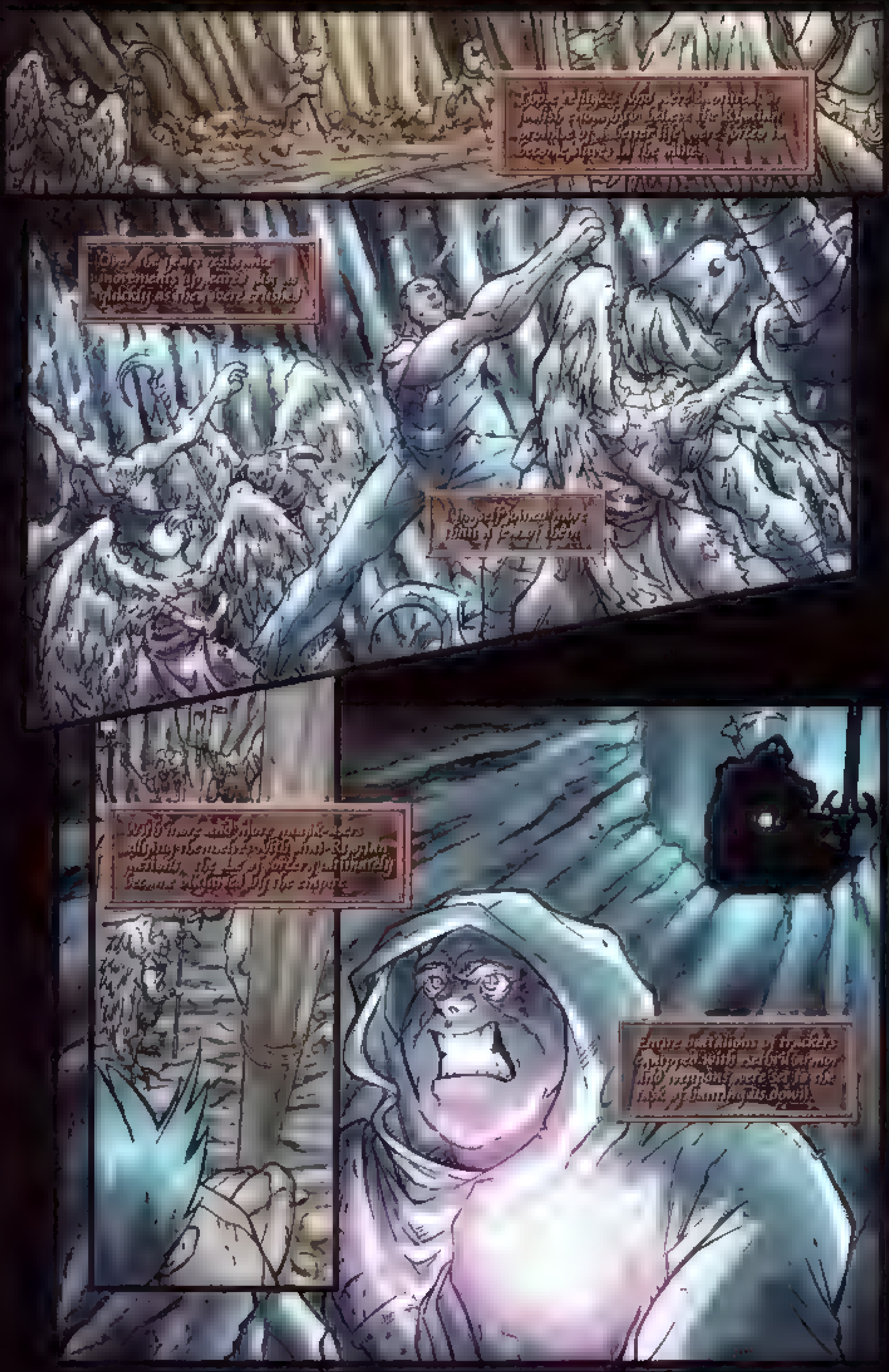
...in the matter of a few moments eight of my people were dead. Killed by their own
They died because I was too jaded to realize the implications of my actions
realized that
my sister would eventually destroy all I held dear
So to save my homeland, I left it.
other races as allies
people would have died pointless deaths
I spent the next seven years in exile learning the arts and lore of the people of the Eastern Continent.

Fate brought me to the Myrish city of Shal Hazar the night the Dataraans returned...
all that death and destruction that
Banded together by destiny, we and the others that would join us along our journey would fight against Malagen and the Dataran Hordes.
And it would ultimately be
To be continued

* See Warlands Volume 1 for details.

* See Warlands Volume I for details.



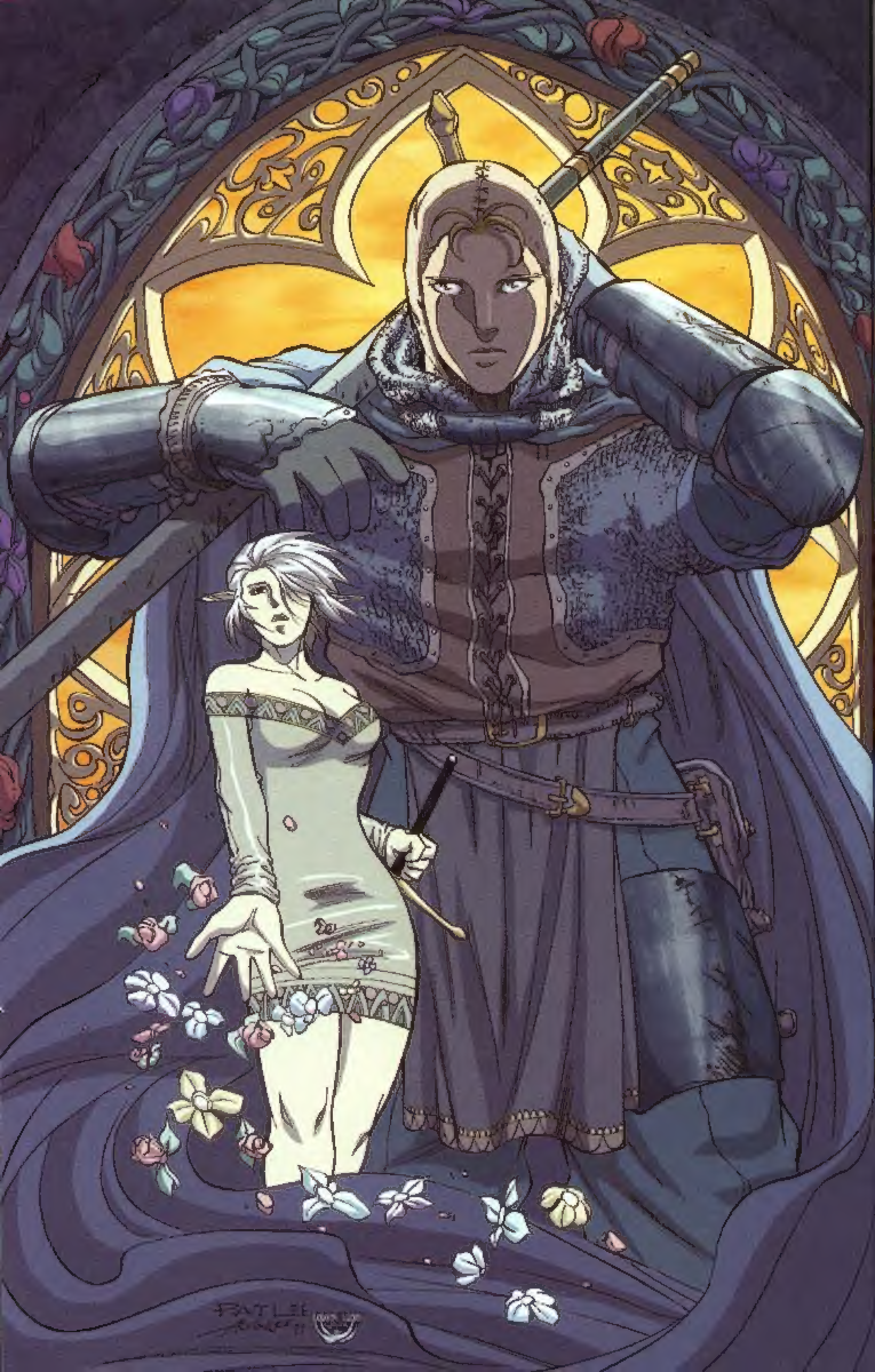


The present
BAH. WHAT IS TIME TO AN IMMORTAL.
Koff..
NOT IMMORTAL. MY MAGIK CAN EXTEND MY LIFE ONLY SO FAR G'DAR.
THE NAMELESS ONES WILL COME FOR ME SOON.

AND THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT WON'T LAST LIKE THIS FOR LONG.
WHAT COURSE OF ACTION DOES A WARRIOR TAKE, WHEN ALL HIS OPTIONS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED?
G'DAR!!!
G'DAR! ANSWER ME!
I lost my closest friend tonight.
I lost part of my soul.

revenge on his rivals--
--when the deceased reaches the gates of the underworld, whole legions of his enemies will follow into the afterlife behind him so that the King of hell will know that a Dran warrior is coming.

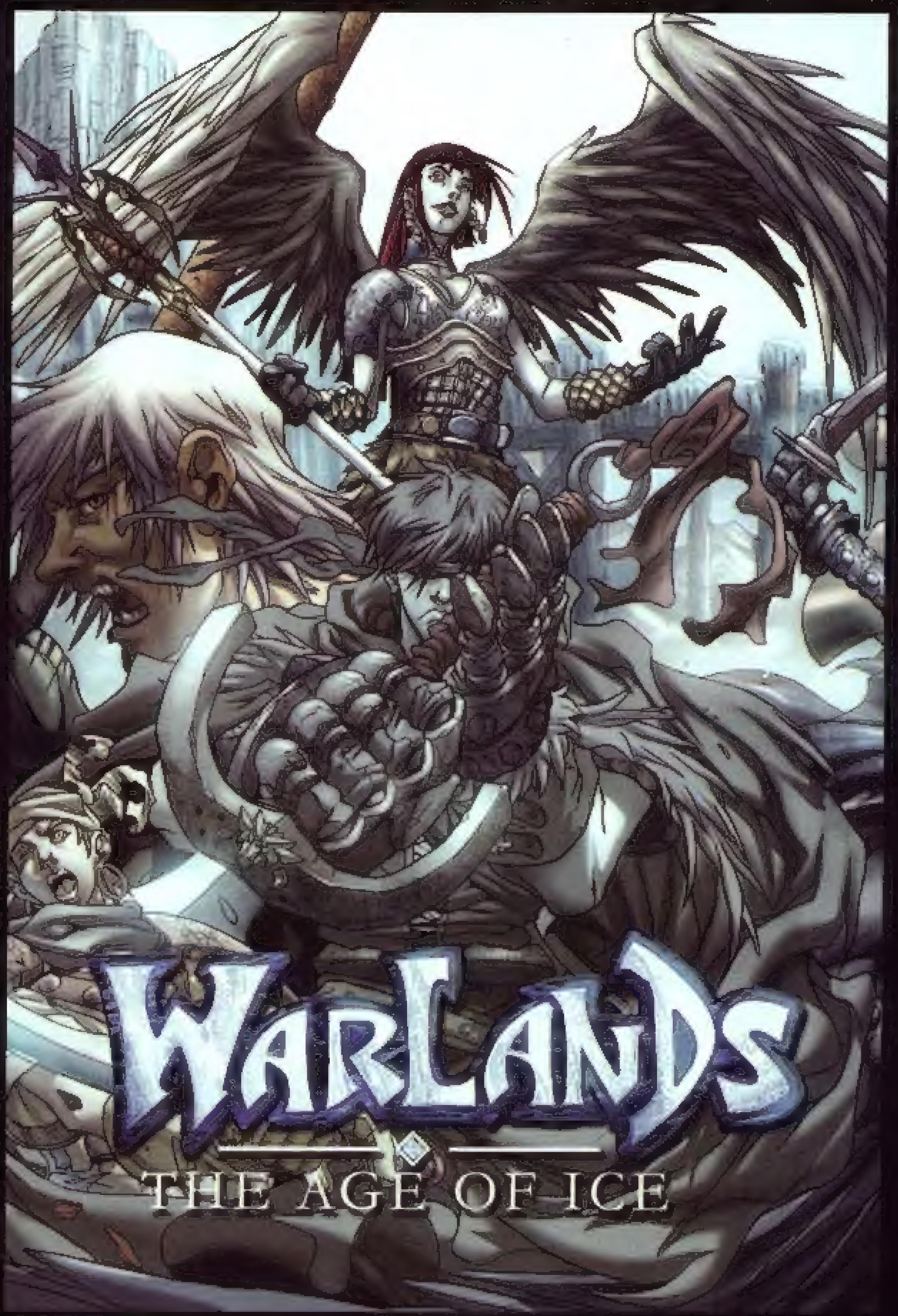
C'Dar is going to have a lot of company
To be continued



PAT LEE

"Very powerful images, and the coloring just seems to suit the mood so well!"

~Jennifer M. Contino
WIZARD / FANDOM / SEQUENTIAL TART



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Enjoy an evening by the fireside in the land of myth, magic and vampires. Experience first hand three tales from the pages of the smash hit comic book series, **Warlands**. Set to the tone of Tolkien-style high fantasy, join a band of would-be heroes as they fight to save their homes from destruction at the hands of the vampire armies of the Dataran Horde.

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